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THE BAGDAD SCHOOL

In 1913, Professor George A. Barton, then of Bryn Mawr College, proposed to the Council of the Archaeological Institute of America that it encourage the establishment of a school of Mesopotamian archaeology at Bagdad. The suggestion was favorably received, and a Committee, with Professor Barton as chairman, was appointed to undertake the task of founding and organizing such a school, provided it was found feasible to do so. Within a few months after the selection of this Committee, the great war broke out and it was impossible to go forward with such an enterprise while the conflict lasted.

Meanwhile, in 1916, Rev. Dr. William Hayes Ward died and bequeathed his valuable oriental library to an American School of Archaeology to be founded in Bagdad, on condition that such a school should be established within ten years after his death.

In 1919, through the joint action of the Committee of the Institute and the Executive Committee of the American School of Oriental Research in Jerusalem, Professor Albert T. Clay of Yale was sent out as the annual professor of the last named School, with the understanding that he should spend a portion of the winter in Mesopotamia. It did not prove altogether easy for him to execute this commission. The disturbed conditions that the war had left behind in the Near East made journeying between Mesopotamia and Palestine extremely difficult. However, through the kindness of the British government he was enabled finally to accomplish his purpose. Arrangements were made for him to reach Mesopotamia by way of Bombay and to enter the country at Bassorah. He visited all the important sites that have been explored thus far, and likewise many others that are less well known. At Bagdad he arranged for the housing of the new American School, which it was expected would begin its work as soon as political conditions should be sufficiently settled.

In 1921, the American Schools of Oriental Research were formally incorporated, and all the members of the Mesopotamian Committee of the Archaeological Institute became members of the new Board of Trustees. In September of that same year a plan was formulated and approved, to establish a Bagdad School and to conduct it in connection with the School in Jerusalem. It is expected that students will find it possible to spend part of the year at Jerusalem and part in Mesopotamia, since communication between these two centers will be comparatively easy when the British railway from Damascus to Mosul is opened. Such an arrangement is made

desirable, further, by the climate of Bagdad, which is hardly suited to continuous residence on the part of many American students.

After the death of Professor Morris Jastrow, Jr., his valuable and well selected library was presented to the Schools by Mrs. Jastrow. The Assyriological works of this collection, in so far as they do not duplicate Dr. Ward's library, will be forwarded to Bagdad, and a beginning will thus be made of a workshop that will afford students excellent facilities for Mesopotamian research.

Professor Barton has been elected by the Trustees as the first Director of the Bagdad School, and Professor Clay its first professor. Several universities, colleges, and patrons have pledged annual contributions to its support, and it is probable that the new School will be actually opened during the winter of 1922-23.

It is hoped that generous gifts may soon prepare the way to include the work of excavation in the programme. The Jerusalem School on its part has just made a modest beginning of such exploration at Tell el-Fül, and the Trustees will be glad to inaugurate a similar undertaking in Mesopotamia when the resources permit. Professor Clay, after his tour of inspection, reported that there were enough unexplored mounds to keep the excavators of the Bagdad School busy for hundreds of years. All who may be interested in any phase of the work of the American Schools of Oriental Research are invited to correspond with the Executive Committee.